

BOGUS VIRUSES AND INTERNET HOAXES

February 8, 1998 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

I receive a steady stream of warnings about alleged computer viruses and other Internet-related "the sky is falling" matters, and I would appreciate the warnings except for two things: (1) I receive dozens, sometimes hundreds, of copies of each one, and (2) practically all of them are hoaxes which are perpetuated by ignorance and the convenience of electronic mail.

Some of the bogus viruses and hoaxes which perpetually make the Internet rounds are "Penpal Greetings," "Join the Crew," "FW: Fwd: Virus Warning," "Irina," "Ghost.exe," "Bill Gates \$1000," "Deeyenda," "Sheep," "PKZip Trojan," "Good Times," "A.I.D.S. virus," "AOL4Free Trojan," "AOL v.4 Cookie Trojan," and "February 14th Riot."

There are many real computer viruses, of course, and every computer user is wise to use virus protection software. A few years ago I "caught" a virus called ANTIEXE. It lodged on the hard drive of one of my computers and then duplicated itself to every floppy disk that I used. When an infected floppy was subsequently used on another computer, it would install the ANTIEXE virus on that hard drive and begin to perpetuate itself, then, from that computer. The virus was not particularly destructive, but it was incredibly frustrating and its removal required hours of labor. Also I lost some information because when the virus was removed it destroyed the boot record and required the reformatting of the disk.

Returning to the subject of bogus viruses and Internet hoaxes, the following web sites contain important information.

Virus Myths Home Page

This entertaining and educational site contains the history of computer virus scares and hoaxes and descriptions of several known virus hoaxes. Included are "Deeyenda virus," "Penpale virus," "Irina virus," "Microsoft Home Page virus," "Ghost.exe virus," and "Good Times virus." <http://www.kumite.com/myths/>

Hype Alerts

<http://www.av.ibm.com/BreakingNews/HypeAlert/>

Internet Hoaxes

This site is operated by the U.S. Department of Energy.
<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACHoaxes.html>

Internet Chain Letters

Another page operated by the U.S. Department of Energy.
<http://ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACChainLetters.html>